**Texas State University**

**Faculty Retention and Salary Adjustment Requests**

The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Texas State University is committed to an effective program of faculty retention, including appropriate and competitive salary compensation. Deans, school directors, and department chairs are encouraged to develop practices for investing in high-performing faculty before they seek or receive offers from other institutions. Beyond salary, there are many other factors that affect faculty retention. However, it may be necessary to consider a salary retention offer for a valued faculty member. In these cases, please use the following guidelines.

**Guidelines**

1. **Faculty Eligibility**. In exceptional cases, a faculty member may be considered for a retention-based salary adjustment. Minimally, the faculty member must have received above-average merit evaluations in recent annual performance reviews, possess an outstanding academic record, and have clear impact on department/school, college, and/or university programs consistent with rank and experience. Upon acceptance of a retention offer, the faculty member agrees to remain committed to Texas State.

2. **Counteroffers**. Counteroffers are used for retention purposes after a faculty member has received a formal, written job offer at a peer or aspirant institution for a comparable position.

3. **Pre-emptive Offers**. Pre-emptive offers are used for retention purposes prior to a formal job offer being made to a faculty member. The university may consider pre-emptive offers for faculty members with outstanding records, especially in areas that are specialized, hard-to-recruit for, and/or fundamental to the university’s strategic goals and plans.

4. **Characteristics of Competing Offers**. A competitive offer must originate from a comparable peer institution or an aspirant institution. The university does not typically respond to opportunities in industry or non-academic employers and may not respond to offers for non-comparable positions.

**5. Other Provisions**. Although extremely rare, a faculty member is eligible for two retention-based salary adjustments during employment at Texas State. Salary adjustments to retain an individual faculty member will not justify salary adjustments for other employees.

**Process**

1. **Faculty member notifies department chair/school director.** The faculty member should inform the department chair/school director of retention questions and concerns, including invitations, formal offers, and other provisions. The chair will meet with the faculty member to discuss concerns and questions and request a copy of the outside offer or other supporting documentation. The chair will alert the department’s personnel committee and the dean of the college and seek concurrence on moving forward with an offer if warranted.
2. **Personnel committee is consulted.** Upon receipt of a copy of the outside offer or other documentation, the chair will consult with members of the personnel committee. Consideration should be given to the individual’s contribution to the department’s mission and other factors as outlined below.
3. **Chair/Director submits recommendation to dean.** In light of feedback from the personnel committee and other information, the department chair will submit a recommendation to the dean of the college. This recommendation will include an explanation of the faculty member’s recent annual evaluations, academic record, and impact on department, college, and/or university goals and initiatives. The recommendation will also detail all aspects of the counter-offer, including salary, research funds, space, workload, etc…

1. **Dean submits recommendation to associate provost.** If the dean approves the department’s recommendation, the request will be forwarded to the associate provost and director, academic budgets in the Office of the Provost for review. The associate provost will consult with the provost, who approves the recommendation and funding. An email approval (or disapproval) will be sent to the dean with a copy to the chair and director, academic budgets.
2. **Chair/Director extends offer.** If approved by the provost, the chair collaborates with the dean or designee on a formal written offer. The offer letter should outline all terms approved by the provost. The letter template is provided below.
3. **Faculty member responds to offer.** If the faculty member accepts the terms, they should sign the offer letter and return it to the chair by the deadline date. If the faculty member does not accept the offer, they should inform the chair in writing of their decision. The chair should send the response to the dean, associate provost, and director, academic budgets.
4. **Budget analyst and department implement terms of the counter-offer.** If accepted by the faculty member, the director, academic budgets will move approved funding to the appropriate departmental account. The chair/director will work with department staff to process the salary adjustment and implement other obligations as stated in the signed offer.

**Issues to Consider**

Please use the following questions to prompt discussion about the unique circumstances and challenges associated with salary-based retention offers. These questions are for reference and do not need to be specifically addressed in recommendations by the department and college.

Record and Achievement:

1) Has the faculty member displayed a pattern of outstanding performance and above-average merit increases?

2) Do the teaching, research, professional and service contributions of the faculty member

promote and align with the strategic goals and initiatives of the department/school, college, and university?

3) In fields for which outside research funding is the norm, does the faculty member generate enough money to support his/her research program?

4) Does the faculty member’s research program influence other research on campus (e.g.,

collaborations, student research, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary research)?

5) How frequently does the faculty member entertain outside offers? Will a current offer end a cycle of retention battles?

Potential and Estimate of Loss:

1) What does the faculty member’s scholarship contribute to the national standing of his/her discipline and to Texas State’s strengths? Is he or she the only person on campus in the field?

2) How do you estimate the faculty member’s potential in terms of research, teaching, and leadership?

3) Does the faculty member meet the standards of “collegiality” set forth in the [AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics](https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-professional-ethics)?

Analysis of Competing Offer:

1) Is the offer from a peer or aspirant institution? If not, what are the grounds for responding?

2) Is the offer for a comparable position? If not, what are the grounds for responding?

3) Does the salary offer include a stipend or the equivalent for the administrative function? Is the salary calculated over 9 or 12 months?

4) How does the cost of living compare at the other institution?

5) Are there spousal or partner consequences for Texas State? For example, will the loss of the faculty member entail the loss of a faculty/staff member in another unit?

6) How will a proposed salary adjustment affect the salary structure in the academic unit?

**Offer Letter Template**

Date

Dear [Professor XXXX]:  
  
In recognition of your contributions and value to Texas State University, the Provost has authorized me to make the following offer to you.  Beginning [September 1, 20XX], your 9-month academic salary will be [$XX,XXX]. In addition, you will be provided with [list any additional commitments and terms of commitments here].

It is a condition of acceptance of this offer that you withdraw immediately from any searches at other institutions in which you are a candidate and that you remain committed to Texas State University.

I sincerely hope this offer will convince you to stay at Texas State University and look forward to receiving your written response to this offer by \_\_\_.

Sincerely,  
  
[XXXX XXXX]  
Department Chair/School Director  
  
I accept the terms of the above offer, agree to decline all current outside offers, and will remain committed to Texas State University. I understand that the salary named above is inclusive of any salary adjustments that may be authorized by the university (e.g., merit, tenure, promotion, etc…) for [September 1, 20XX]. I understand faculty are limited to two such offers during employment at Texas State.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
[Professor XXXX], Date

**Reasons for Faculty Turnover**

* Better opportunity - higher salary, more resources, more prestigious department/institution, administrative appointment (e.g., dean), position outside academe
* Location and family - career opportunities for spouse/partner, better policies related to key benefits or family concerns, desirable geographic location, to be closer to family
* Work environment and fit - better campus climate, intellectual fit, lack of collegiality in unit, potential for better work-life balance in a different type of position
* Retirement - “natural” retirement, early retirement for another position, negotiated exit for misbehavior
* Writing on the wall - not well suited to faculty career, poor likelihood of tenure, promotion, or contract renewal

Source: O’Meara, K., Lounder, A., & Campbell, C. (2014). To Heaven or Hell: Sensemaking about why faculty leave. *Journal of Higher Education.* 85 (5), 603-632

Language and concepts included in these guidelines are based on:

Purdue University, Office of the Provost, [Faculty Initiatives](https://www.purdue.edu/provost/faculty/initiatives/index.html)

University of Texas, College of Liberal Arts, [Faculty Retention](https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/larc/Faculty+Retention)

University of Washington, College of Arts & Sciences, [Competitive and Pre-emptive Offers](https://admin.artsci.washington.edu/personnel/competitive-and-pre-emptive-offers)

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